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Summer means outdoor recreation, and the Bureau of Land Management urges everyone to be careful with fire.

According to Montana BLM State Director Marty Ott, "A few places in the state have been lucky enough to get some rain, but it hasn't been enough to raise the fuel moisture in large trees. In some areas, the grass never really turned green this spring. It is bone dry out there, and the potential exists for a very busy fire season."

The BLM recently instituted some year-round wildfire prevention restrictions. These prohibitions apply to all BLM-administered public lands in Montana and North and South Dakota. They include:

- the discharge or use of any fireworks;
- the discharge of a firearm using incendiary or tracer ammunition;
- the burning, igniting or causing to burn any tire, wire, magnesium, or any other hazardous or explosive material;
- operating any off-highway vehicle on public lands unless the vehicle is equipped with a properly-installed spark arrester. Spark arresters are not required when an off-highway vehicle is being operated in an area with has three or more inches of snow on the ground.

These restrictions will remain in place indefinitely.

It's likely that further short-term fire restrictions will be applied before the summer is over, depending on the weather. Members of the public are urged to contact their local BLM office before recreating on public lands to see what activities are allowed.

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